so, it cannot properly be said, that Mr. Pratt, by means of his machine, can produce Gothic tracery, the beauty of which depends entirely upon the accuracy of the mitreing. Having, upon several occasions, had an opportunity of carefully examining work executed by this process, I have invariably found it rough and inferior in every respect to that done by hand, and am also of opinion, that instead of "*calling into operation a school of carvers*," it will have a contrary effect. My reason for arriving at this conclusion is, that the present race of carvers are sadly wanting in their knowledge of, and, in fact, seem to have no conception of *relief*. The carver of wood or stone, if he works upon material prepared by the machine, thus literally throws away the best opportunity he has of acquiring freedom in execution, combined with taste, the "*roughing out*" being the most essential part of his art.

As regards the specimens alluded to at Ravensworth Castle and Malvern, they are at too great a distance from town for those who are most interested in the matter to visit, but fortunately the machine decoration to that splendid ecclesiastical edifice, Camberwell New Church, may be seen and *admired* by any person who may feel inclined to trouble himself by walking or riding that far, or by calling at Mr. Pratt's establishment, in New Bond-street. I beg to apologize for the length of this communication, and am, Sir, &c.,

F. M.

8, Great College-street, Westminster,
March 26th, 1845.

JAMAICA LUNATIC ASYLUM.

Sir,—Not having seen in your very excellent work any account of the competition for the Jamaica Lunatic Asylum, I presume you are not aware that it is decided; and knowing you are anxious for information upon those subjects, I avail myself of this opportunity to state that Mr. Jos. Harris, resident engineer of the Hanwell Asylum, was the successful competitor.

I feel much pleasure in saying that no influence whatever, either directly or indirectly, was used by that gentlemen or his friends to affect the decision, which, under such circumstances, must have arisen from the merit of the design.

The following notice is from a Jamaica paper, dated 11th Feb., 1845:—

"*The Lunatic Asylum.*—There was a meeting on Wednesday last, at the King's house, of the Commissioners appointed to carry out the Act for Building a new Lunatic Asylum, his excellency the Governor in the chair. It is said that the object of this meeting was to receive the report of the committee, which had been previously appointed, to select one of the numerous plans and models submitted to the commissioners for examination and approval, when that of J. Harris, Esq., the resident engineer of the Hanwell Asylum, in England (which is the largest and best of the kind in all Europe), was approved of."

I am, Sir, &c.,

Notting-hill. J. R. Croft.

COMPETITION—CLIFTON UNION.

Sir,—A letter, signed "Thomas Allom," appeared in The Builder of the 29th of March, in which it is more than insinuated that in the choice of a plan for a new workhouse, the guardians of the Clifton Union had acted with partiality, no other proof being adduced than the bare circumstance that the plan, which has been chosen, was prepared by a Bristol architect.

Mr. Allom cites the opinion of a professional gentleman, who was engaged to assist in the examination of plans, as having been favourable to his; it is readily admitted that the opinion referred to was favourable to Mr. Allom's plan *architecturally considered*, but it should be remembered that the chief requisites in a plan for a workhouse are, sufficient space for the inmates, and proper arrangement for their classification and inspection, to which requirements the architectural design of the building ought to be subordinate. In citing the opinion already mentioned, Mr. Allom omitted to notice two important features in the report which contained that opinion, namely, that Mr. Allom's plan shewed a deficiency of space for several classes of the inmates, and that to carry it out would cost 3,600*l.* *more than Mr. Allom's estimate*. To this it may be added, that the same professional gentleman alluded to estimated the cost of carrying out the plan which has been chosen (similar materials of every kind being taken into the calculation for both plans) at 1,902*l.* *less than Mr. Allom's plan*. Now, admitting the two plans to have possessed equal merit (which was not the case, the plan chosen *being superior in the three chief requisites of space, classification, and inspection*), surely there was sufficient and substantial ground for giving the preference to a plan which a professional adviser stated would cost 1,902*l.* less than Mr. Allom's.

It might very easily be shewn that of all the architects who sent plans Mr. Allom should have been the last to complain of partiality having been shewn, but the object of the writer is not to wound the feelings of any one, but simply to record one or two incontrovertible facts, in order to prove to the professional gentlemen who sent plans that the guardians have acted towards them with perfect good faith.—I am, Sir, &c.,

A Guardian.

Bristol, April 4, 1845.

*** A correspondent desires to know who is the successful candidate: the name has not yet reached us.

THE FLOATING DOCK.

Sir,—In The Builder of 15th March, it is mentioned, that a Mr. Lennox has invented a floating-dock, and that the directors of Woolwich Dock-yard have been ordered to prepare detail drawings of the scheme.

I most respectfully ask to be informed whether the above-mentioned floating-dock means a *dry* floating-dock. If it means a dry floating-dock, I am pleased to know that some person more competent than myself has fortunately step forward for so laudable a purpose. Not only our own merchants and government, but merchants of other nations will feel its beneficial effect, to say nothing of the many lives of our bold and adventurous tars it will probably be the means of saving. If it does not mean a dry floating-dock, you will hear further from me.

I am, Sir, &c. W. R.

EXHIBITION OF WORKS OF DECORATIVE ART, &c.

Sir,—You have doubtless heard of the various projects on foot for the establishment of galleries for the purpose of exhibiting mechanically-factured and decorative works of art,—places to bring together such matters as were exhibited lately in St. James's-street.

There can be but one opinion as to the utility of such exhibitions when properly conducted. They offer the means to the artist and artisan of communicating directly with the public, of coming before them, in fact, without the intervention of a third party—an advantage of no little consideration; and this must most evidently tend to promote the taste and increase the demand for works of this nature.

Although the exhibition in St. James's-street made no great impression on the public, neither was it to be expected that it should, for most of the decorative instances were attempts of persons not regularly educated in the principles of ornament, but emanations from hitherto untried hands, evincing the skill and perseverance of an emulation just beyond the workshop. An artist, in the accepted sense of the term, could but in few instances be said to have exhibited at all. Take that exhibition under its true circumstances, I think you will agree that it was satisfactory; for though a smile may have been excited at an ambiguous attempt here and there, scarcely any one could pass through the room without respecting the united efforts.

Such an exhibition is a school for the exhibitor; he cannot compare his attempt with the attempts of others without learning many important things, one of which, and a very material one, will be his own value. It is very difficult to judge of the respective value of two matters extremely remote in quality, but the "little-better" is always easily observed, and has a more encouraging effect.

The main things wanting to such an exhibition, is to give it a good place and permanency. Now, Sir, without disparaging any of the projects in hand, I would submit, with your permission, to the interested public, through the agency of your effective journal, a single suggestion on the subject, and that is that some portion of the vast area which forms the site of the British Museum should be appropriated to a purpose of this kind. The able superintendence under which the Museum is now so admirably conducted, would ensure success. There are many reasons which will readily occur why institutions of this kind, got up by private individuals, should fail. There ought to be, in my opinion, but one place of the kind, and that the most public that can be found. Trusting that the importance of the subject will be my sufficient excuse.

I am, Sir, &c.,

Bedford-square. W. A. Hopkins.

BURIAL-GROUND OF ST. SAVIOUR'S, SOUTHWARK.

Sir,—On perusing your journal of the 5th instant, I find a paragraph referring to the state of the burial-ground of St. Saviour's Church, Southwark, and what the parishioners had done in consequence.

Allow me to draw your attention to a few particulars connected with this matter, and then I will leave it with your sound judgment to determine whether much has not been said in the public journals on this subject that might have been well spared until they had better information, or at least until the committee to whom it is referred had investigated the matter, and reported thereon to the vestry.

You know that there are two days in the year when vestry meetings are held differing in their power to any of the others that may be held, viz. Easter Tuesday, and Michaelmas-day. On these days any parishioner can propose any resolution without giving previous notice thereof, and if carried, need no confirmation by a subsequent vestry,—such was the case on Easter Tuesday. What the vestry really did was to refer it to the wardens and a committee of six inhabitants to investigate the matter and report to a future vestry.

The churchyard in question contains 1,603 yards superficial, from which a deduction of 233 yards for paths may be taken, leaving 1,370 yards free for burials.

The whole amount of burials therein in three following years just passed, was 245, of which 91 were infants, 33 under thirty years of age, 121 above thirty,—being not quite an average of 82 per annum, and consist of 30 infants, 11 under thirty, and 41 above.

The committee's first meeting to investigate this matter was on Thursday afternoon last, after which probably you may hear again from

A Subscriber to your Journal,
and an Inhabitant of St.
Saviour's, Southwark.

History of a London Workshop.—A man begins by employing a few hands in a house often but ill-adapted for an ordinary dwelling-house, and, as his business increases, he contrives to add one low apartment to another, by knocking down partition-walls, and making such alterations as suit his immediate purpose. He contrives by this means to accommodate an increasing number of men, and the only practicable limit to that number is the want of mere standing or sitting-room, as the case may be. He warms these rooms by a stove, by steam, or by hot air, and lights them with gas: the consequence is, that the workmen are exposed at the same time to a high temperature, and a foul and stagnant atmosphere. This combination is carried to its highest degree in tailors' workshops, and I have been told more than once by the journeymen tailors themselves, that they have been obliged to strip to the very skin, that they might be able to bear the intense heat to which they are exposed. In buildings intended for workshops more space is given to the men, but they are usually constructed on very bad principles; the whole building often forming one space, divided by floors perforated by a common staircase; if a steam-engine is employed, it is generally to be found in a lower apartment of this building, so that the heat rises from this into the upper rooms, and, mingling with the foul air of the intermediate floors, ascends to the highest flat, where the hot and foul air collects in great abundance.—*Medical Times.*

For a comprehensive guide on OCR and PDF Compression go to our website